UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PRODUCTION AND MARKETING ADMINISTRATION
NEW MEXICO State College, New Mexico 11-7-47
No. 267

WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

FARMER ELECTIONS - New Mexico farmers were reminded today that they have only a few more days before farm program elections are held. Election dates will be announced locally by the county agricultural conservation committee. But all elections must be completed in the State by November 28, 1947.

When the elections are held farmers participating in the Agricultural Conservation Program, Sugar Program, or who are in the Federal Crop Insurance Program will be eligible to vote. A community agricultural conservation committee will be elected and at the same time delegates to the county convention will be chosen. At the county convention, to be held later, a county committee will be elected.

Farmers were urged to plan now to vote in this election, advises C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the State PMA Committee. Many important decisions affecting agriculture will have to be made in the coming year, and farmers should make sure that the leadership they elect in the farm program will voice the opinion of the majority of farmers.

Secretary of Agriculture, Clinton P. Anderson, has said that this farmer-elected committeemen type of administration right down to the county and community level has proved the most effective organization yet devised to administer any national farm program.

"But its strength," Mr. Hemphill adds, "depends on the support given by individual farmers. Committeemen should feel that they have the farmers back of them and the way to provide this assurance is for every eligible farmer to get out and vote."

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PRIORITIES APPLIED TO CONSERVATION PRACTICES - Many State PMA Committees and State technical committees which work with them in selecting farm practices to meet the conservation needs of the State have taken a practical and realistic view of adjustments needed in the 1948 Agricultural Conservation Program, because of the prospective cut in funds, according to Allen W. Manchester, head of PMA's Agricultural Conservation Programs Branch.

To make conservation funds go as far as possible in getting the conservation job done, many committees have listed practices on a first, second and third choice basis. Those practices most urgently needed and which will result in the greatest conservation for each dollar spent head the list. Other practices—not so urgently needed or which have been adopted rather generally—are not given as much emphasis, and funds for assistance have been cut down. In some instances practices have been dropped.

In a number of Western States, protected summer fallow on wheatland has been left off the list. In others it has been incorporated as a supporting practice. For instance, in some States protected summer fallow is a part of the stripcropping or contour seeding practices. No payment is made on the protected summer fallow but it is required as a condition to earning a payment on the stripcropping.

Under the 1948 program some States will not offer assistance for the application of phosphate, not because the application is not an excellent and needed conservation practice but because it is believed that available funds will get more conservation if used on other practices. These might include erosion control dams, terraces, contour farming, reorganization of the farm irrigation system, and the establishing of sod waterways.

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BEEF CATTLE FEEDERS CAN SAVE GRAIN - Cattle feeders who are fattening cattle for the market can save grain by feeding their animals less grain and more hay. That is what feeders at the North Carolina Experiment Station found as a result of some experiments that were completed recently. The experiments were designed to see how much concentrate feed could be saved by varying the amount of hay and grain fed to beef animals.

The experimenters fed yearling steers on varying amounts of lespedeza hay and barley with a small amount of protein supplement. They found that reducing the amount of barley to two-thirds of a full grain ration produced the best results in the savings of grain when the grade of carcass produced was considered.

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STOP FEEDING RATS, SAYS USDA - A good way to increase the supply of grains available for human food is to stop feeding so much of it to rats, grain weevils, and other insect pests, says the U. S. Department of Agriculture. And a good place to start preventing such losses is on the farms, where 97 percent of the corn, 60 percent of the wheat, and 94 percent of the oats are normally stored.

According to USDA estimates, insects cause the loss of at least 5 percent of stored grain and cereal products every year. Rats destroy another 4 percent. Translated into grain and money -- at 1945 prices -- insects destroy over $350 million worth of stored grains annually, and rats and mice account for another $200 million worth.

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WORLD COTTON CROP SHOWS RISE - World cotton production for 1947-48 is estimated at 26.1 million bales, the Department of Agriculture reports. This is 21 percent more than the preceding year's exceptionally small crop of 21.5 million bales.

Nearly all the increase is due to larger crops in the United States and

the Soviet Union, in the Northern Hemisphere, and expected increases in Brazil, Argentina, and Peru where the 1947-48 crops are still being planted.

Production estimates are: U. S., 11.5 million bales, 33 percent above 1946; China, 2.2 million, compared with 1.9 million the year before; India, 3.3 million bales, compared with 3.4 the previous year; Brazil, 2 million bales; Egypt, 1,262,000 bales, compared with 1,252,000 last year; Soviet Union, an official program goal of 2,935,000 bales, compared with a 1946 harvested crop of 2.2 million.

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NEW MEXICO

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

FREE SPEECH - The recent House and Senate Hearings throughout the country on the long-range farm program gave farmers a chance to demonstrate their cherished privilege of freedom of speech.

At these meetings a few said, "Let the farmer stand on his own feet," but the majority view was summed up by a grinning Negro, Joe Brooks, from Yazoo County, Mississippi. He stepped up before the House Committee and said:

"If the farmer is the backbone of the world, as some folks say, and this farm program expires next year, the world is going to have a very weak backbone." To stress his point, Brooks added: "Way back yonder, in my country, there was a fellow that when his crops didn't look good his wife left him. But when these parity payments came in his wife came back."

An Ohio farmer testified:

"We farmers for generations have been mining our soil to subsidize the consumer. The consumer got lower prices while our soil deteriorated. I think it's time the consumer subsidized the farmer to help him get the fertility back in the soil."

At Kansas City, a Missouri farmer, George H. Christopher, told the Committee members of Congress "ought to be ashamed of yourselves" for cutting next year's soil conservation payments from $300,000,000 to $150,000,000.

There appeared to be wide agreement on government price supports. One farmer smiled and said "I guess we want to individualize our profits and socialize our losses."

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IMPROVED CREDIT IMPROVES THE SOIL - In 1916 the average rate for interest and commissions on New Mexico farm mortgage loans was 10.5 percent. The interest now saved by farmers with their own credit system enables them to bear a large percentage of the cost of carrying out practices under the Agricultural Conservation Program.

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FARM PROGRAM IS CONSERVATION INVESTMENT - Through the Agricultural Conservation Program, the Nation is investing in food and fiber security, believes C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico State PMA Committee. The conservation practices which farmers are carrying out under the program are not only increasing production to meet present needs, but they are cutting down erosion and stimulating better farming practices which will help insure continued abundant production.

The direct payments made to farmers and the materials and services furnished under the program, Mr. Hemphill said, are just as much public investments in conservation as are public expenditures for education and for technical assistance to farmers. They are just a more direct way of getting the conservation job done. The assistance to farmers under the ACP is helping to make educational work and other demonstrations effective.

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EARLY PASTURE SAVES GRAIN - "Early spring pasture is one of the most welcome crops that a farmer can have. It furnishes feed for all kinds of farm animals ...dairy cattle, hogs, chickens, or turkeys. Not only will early spring pasture next year be welcome to farmers who have it...the pasture will save grain at a time the grain will be needed badly for shipment overseas." This is the message of livestock specialists passed on by C. V. Hemphill, New Mexico State PMA Chairman, in urging farmers to save grain.

The chairman pointed out that there are a number of these crops. Probably the best known is rye, but others are barley, winter oats, ryegrass, winter peas, and several of the vetches. These crops come early in the spring before permanent pastures have made much growth and furnish feed for 2 to 3 weeks before permanent pastures are ready to be pastured.

He pointed out further that all of these crops will do a good job of soil conservation during the winter by holding the soil. If they are turned under

in the spring, they will enrich the soil as other green manure crops will.

ACP committeemen and county agents know what crops have been most successfully used for early pasture in their own counties.

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CONSERVATION PROGRAM LOCALIZED - "It's right out on my farm - and your farm - and every other farmer's farm that this erosion and wearing out and washing away of the soil is going on. Ant it's right out on these farms that conservation practices have to be carried out if we keep our soil so we can produce the food we need and the folks in town need and the hungry people in Europe need.

"That's why the Agricultural Conservation Program is so effective in getting the conservation job done. It is carried out on each farm and through the assistance provided each farmer is able to carry out the most needed conservation practices on his farm."

With this preface, (Name), Chairman of the (Name) County Agricultural Conservation Committee, explained that the 1948 Agricultural Conservation Program has been localized to meet the particular needs of a county or an individual farmer.

Funds to be used to assist farmers in carrying out approved 1948 conservation practices have been greatly reduced. This means the assistance available to each farmer will be less. Where in the past assistance has covered about half the "out of pocket" cost, with the farmer doing the work, under the 1948 program farmers will have to contribute a larger share. Program assistance will be further concentrated on practices providing the greatest conservation results for each dollar spent.

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FARM FACE-LIFTING DRAWS 5,000 - More than 5,000 people attended the opening day of Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Demonstration at Lewiston and McVeyton, October 21 and 22. This huge crowd of farmers, businessmen, veterans, women, and children saw a farm which had been idle for 12 years brought back to life.

The veteran, Eugene Harshbarger, and his young wife are getting a good start in conservation farming. The Pennsylvania PMA Committee had a real opportunity to demonstrate conservation practices, and the Veterans Administration was able to give some good training in better farming.

The preliminaries of the demonstration included a farmers' night with a banquet furnished by the Lions Club. The next morning a cavalcade moved out to the Harshbarger farm where machinery was ready to go into action.

A post-hole digger dug 237 postholes in 240 minutes. That included time out to explain the digger and for repairs. Big and little bulldozers pushed the earth around in removing old fence rows, constructing terraces, filling gullies and building a farm pond. Lime and phosphate spreaders went up and down the fields dusting the land with life-giving minerals. Trees were planted and crops seeded on the contour.

Except for the larger bulldozers, all the machinery used would be practical on an average farm. But in this demonstration machinery dealers loaned the machinery and fertilizer people donated the 90 tons of lime and 20 tons of phosphate spread on the land.

The Soil Conservation Service cooperated with PMA in laying out the contour lines and providing other technical assistance.

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WHEN THE WINDS COME - Drought and the plowing up of huge tracts of land to grow wheat have recalled the dust storms of the early thirties. Can we expect the storms again?

C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the State PMA Committee, points out a number of things that should not be overlooked in connection with this threat of wind erosion. He mentions a number of improved farming methods now being practiced by many which will help in the event of continued dry weather next year. Fewer

farmers are burning their straw. The straw from grain crops is being incorprated into the surface soil to help hold the soil from either wind or water erosion. Strip-cropping is being used more now than in the thirties. The alternate strips of grain and fallow check the sweeping effect of the wind. If there is nothing to stop it, wind can sweep across the land taking the loose soil with it down to the plow-sole, or hard sub-surface.

Cross listing and sub-soiling are in the Agricultural Conservation Program as measures to be used in emergency if the land starts to blow. Also farmers have been encouraged to plant windbreaks and pastures as protective measures against wind erosion.

But, Mr. Hemphill said, some land that has been plowed up in the past few years has been put into wheat production by farmers who are not cooperating in the Agricultural Conservation Program. High prices for wheat have attracted them and they, too often, are interested only in producing while prices are good and then letting the land go. So, while farmers who have cooperated in the program are better prepared to hold their land in the event of drought and wind, there are many farmers who are not in the program. This threatens the whole area subject to blowing. Once the surface soil starts moving, the fine grains of sand start cutting away even the more stable soil.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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NEW MEXICO State College, New Mexico
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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

BE THANKFUL BUT CONSERVE - We are thankful that American farmers have produced 40 percent more food in 1947 than they did back in the period 1935 to 1939, but there is a sobering thought that should not be overlooked this Thanksgiving.

Mr. C. V. Hemphill, New Mexico PMA Chairman, in making this statement, said he had no intentions of casting any spirit of gloom over the holiday, but that too often we forget "from whence cometh our strength."

"We should not forget that, today there are only 2½ acres of harvested cropland for each person from which we have taken this abundance of food," he said. "Twenty-five years ago it was 3¼ acres per person."

He went on to point out that, with the amount of land limited and the population increasing, it is time that every person took an interest in protecting our topsoil from which we derive most of our food.

When the first Thanksgiving was held in this country there was an average of 9 inches of topsoil. Now there are 6 inches.

Through the Agricultural Conservation Program, the Nation has an opportunity to cooperate — and it is cooperating — with its farmers in conserving soil and water. By assisting these farmers in carrying out soil and water-conservation practices, the Nation is helping to make sure that future Thanksgiving days will continue to have the abundance of 1947.

"But if we neglect our land our soil will go, and with it our civilization," was the dire prediction of the State Chairman.

"We have much to be thankful for but a Divine Providence will neither forgive nor continue abundant blessings if we fail to do our part in protecting our land."

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U. S. FARMERS AND THE MARSHALL PLAN - How would the Marshall Plan affect American agriculture?

According to Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson its adoption would mean that the success of American foreign policy for at least 4 more years would continue to rest in a large measure on the shoulders of farm people.

If funds are supplied to finance the aid requested by the 16 Western European Nations, Secretary Anderson has stated, it would have these three effects on U. S. agriculture:

1. It would mean continued high U. S. food production during all 4 years particularly in the grain producing areas of the Nation — and in general would require continued full use of the farm plant;

2. It would continue the strain on our grain-producing areas and further delay needed shifts to grassland agriculture:

3. It would mean a self-supporting European market for our farm products following the 4-year period which would be considerably larger than could otherwise be expected.

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STRIP-CROPPING SAVES SOIL - Strip-cropping was carried out on 6,678,000 acres of cropland under the 1946 Agricultural Conservation Program. Since the beginning of the program in 1936 farmers have been assisted in strip-cropping more than 53 million acres of land.

In drought areas threatened with dust storms, this practice of alternating a crop of grain with a strip of fallow will help to hold the soil. To be successful, however, there must be a growing crop or a strip of unplowed stubble to hold the soil in place. The vegetation on top of the soil and the roots of the plants help to tie the soil down.

Unprotected summer fallow or plowed land in which there is little if any organic matter in the surface gives the wind a chance to pick up the fine particles of soil. These small particles of sand help to loosen more soil as they are moved by the wind across the field. Strips tied down with a crop check this wearing away by the wind.

Strip-cropping also helps to hold moisture on the land. The vegetation on the strip in a crop slows down the surface run-off from rain or melting snow. More of the moisture is absorbed into the soil to supply needed moisture later on.

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KEEPING UP ORGANIC MATTER INSURES YIELDS - Many instances of complete failure in some fields and a 50 bushel corn crop on others caused Middle Western farmers in last spring's flood areas to do some checking.

PMA Grain Branch fieldmen report some of the observations of these Corn Belt farmers.

Farmers who had such widely contrasting results found that fields which produced the 50-bushel crops of corn had had the benefit of legume green manure crops. The other fields were farmed under the put-nothing-back system. When the heavy rains came, the soils with plowed-under organic matter absorbed much of the rain. When drying weather came these soils dried out, quickly and were ready to plant fairly soon. Where organic matter had not been plowed back the heavy rains caused the soil to puddle and it dried out slowly. When the corn finally was planted it was slow in starting and never did catch up.

Agricultural Conservation Program practices materially helped farmers in the flood areas. Many program practices on cultivated land increased the amount of organic matter that is turned under.

Lime is used to promote the growth of legumes. Phosphate and potash increase the growth of legumes and grasses. Terracing and contour cropping conserve moisture. All these help to produce more organic matter to hold and build up the soil.

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PRAIRIE MULCHER IMPROVES USE OF STRAW - A machine called the prairie mulcher is being used by some Dakota farmers to use grain straw more efficiently.

With the large crops that have been produced in the last few years, the straw has been heavy and caused difficulty in operating tillage machinery. If all of it was turned under with a moldboard plow it formed a blanket between the furrow slice and the subsoil. That blanket prevented proper water movement in the soil and tied up otherwise available nitrogen in its decomposition. Of course, the top layer dried out and most of the wheat planted in it perished. The only alternative to turning under the straw was to burn it. Farmers remembered their experiences with dust storms and didn't want to do that. So a few of them have been trying to devise some way of using the straw so that it will help them conserve their soils. The prairie mulcher is a result of that effort.

The prairie mulcher looks like a wheel about 6 feet in diameter. Around the rim of the wheel there are pegs like harrow teeth. In operation, the wheel lies flat on the ground, suspended under a frame so that it can revolve slowly. Ordinarily it is pulled behind a moldboard plow. As it revolves, the teeth of the machine pick up some of the straw in the stubble and carry it over on the plowed land. That move keeps part of the straw from being plowed under and puts it on the already-plowed land where it will help conserve moisture and prevent wind erosion.

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Production and Marketing Administration
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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

1948 ACP HANDBOOKS ANNOUNCED - New Mexico's 1948 Agricultural Conservation Program handbook has been approved and will soon be available to county agricultural conservation committees for use in explaining the 1948 program to farmers of the State, C. V. Hemphill, State PMA Chairman, announced today.

According to Mr. Hemphill, the handbook lists the conservation practices which have been approved for the farmers of the State. Specifications for each practice and rates of payment are included.

The handbook, this year has many authors, the chairman explains. It was started back in the spring of 1947 when county committeemen were asked to check with community committeemen and farmers in their counties for recommendations for the 1948 program. These recommendations were sent in to the State PMA Committee for review. A technical committee comprised of agricultural specialists of the Experiment Station and Extension Service and representatives of other agencies of the Department of Agriculture assisted the State Committee in this review and in making further recommendations.

In Washington representatives of the Agricultural Conservation Programs Branch of PMA met with State PMA committeemen and together they checked State recommendations against an approved national outline of practices. The State handbook grew out of this "grass roots" thinking of farmers and their committeemen from every State in the country. In this way, farmers have had a part in making the handbook a practical guide for 1948 conservation practices.

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TERRACES INCLUDED IN 1948 PROGRAM - Because of their effective and direct method of stopping erosion, terraces again have been included in the State's Agricultural Conservation program. Under the 1948 program, farmers may obtain direct assistance to help them carry out this conservation practice, (Name),

Chairman of _____County Agricultural Conservation Committee, announced this week.

Assistance amounting to about half the cost of constructing the terraces will be available to farmers who sign up in the program and who carry out the practice according to approved specifications.

He explained that a terrace is a broad ridge of earth constructed across the slope of the land in such a manner that it will intercept the run-off from above the terrace. Construction is such that the water is absorbed or held back without overtopping the ridge. Or is carried off the field at velocities that will prevent channel erosion. Proper outlets are essential.

The chairman explains further that the height and spacing of terraces are determined by the slope of the land and the amount of run-off expected. The steeper the slope the shorter the distance between terraces. The greater the run-off the higher the terrace.

Before going ahead with the construction of terraces for which assistance is expected, farmers should check with the county agricultural conservation committee.

A properly constructed terrace should not interfere with normal farming operations, Mr. _____said. Terraces fit in well with contour farming. They help to hold both soil and water on the farm where it can be used to grow the needed food and fiber crops.

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NO QUOTAS FOR '48 COTTON CROP - "No cotton marketing quotas and no acreage allotments for the 1948 cotton crop," says the Department of Agriculture. This action was taken in accordance with provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, designed to protect both consumers and producers in maintaining adequate supplies of foods and fibers.

The AAA law requires that whenever the total U. S. supply of cotton for any

marketing year exceeds the normal supply for such year by more than 7 percent, the Secretary of Agriculture is required to proclaim quotas. The total supply for the current marketing year, starting August 1, 1947, however, did not reach this level.

A "normal cotton supply" is a normal year's domestic consumption and exports plus 40 percent as an allowance for a carry-over. The "normal supply" for this marketing year was 18.2 million bales, about the same as in prewar years. The total supply for the year was about 16.5 million bales.

Under the law for marketing quotas, cotton allotments to farms if proclaimed would total about 27 million acres. A total of almost 21 million acres was in cultivation on July 1, 1947.

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REPORT COMPLETED CONSERVATION PRACTICES NOW - Completed conservation practices should be reported by farmers to the county agricultural conservation committee or at the county office, says _____, Chairman of the ACP Committee. Delay in reporting will delay payments, he said.

All conservation practices under the 1947 Agricultural Conservation Program must be completed by December 31, 1947, but farmers who have completed practices should not wait until then to report. This cooperation with the county office will be helping us do you a better job and will speed up payments, Mr. _____said.

All practices must be reported by January 15, 1948.

Mr. _____ explained that farmers themselves have a responsibility in supplying the county office with the necessary evidence of practices carried out. Failure to report adds to the cost of administering the program and results in unnecessary delay.

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ORGANIC MATTER MAKES LAND WORK EASIER - The importance of keeping up the organic matter in the soil is indicated in reports of state Agricultural Conservation committeemen.

In one case reported the father of two boys ran a dike along a river bank so that he could grow corn on the land adjoining the river. That was over 40 years ago. Year after year he grew nothing but corn. Later the river bottom land was given to one of the boys. Another part of the farm which had been in a rotation of corn, oats, and clover was given to the other boy.

Just 34 years after the river bottom land was broken up, the boy who had inherited the upland bought a tractor. He found that with it he could pull a two-bottom plow in high gear. The boy who had inherited the bottom land also bought a tractor. The river bottom land that had been in corn continuously was harder to work. The tractor stayed in low gear.

Then the owner of the bottom land began to rotate the crops. After he had turned under one legume crop, he found that he could pull the two-bottom plow in intermediate gear. After he had plowed under a second legume crop, the tractor could pull a two-bottom plow in high gear.

From this experience the State ACP chairman points out that the ACP practice of growing and turning under a legume not only holds soil and builds up fertility, but also makes the soil easier and cheaper to work.

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ACP HELPS ALABAMA FARMERS - Alabama's Extension Service Director, P. O. Davis, sums up accomplishments of the Agricultural Conservation Program in his state in a story which was featured in the November "Rural Alabama." Here is the Director's story:

In a series of district meetings late in August, we had an opportunity to study and summarize changes and progress of Alabama agriculture since the beginning of the Agricultural Adjustment program (AAA) in 1933, now known as the Production and Marketing Administration (PMA).

All agreed that the farmers who have made these changes and improvements are the people to whom full credit is due. They took advantage of opportunities to improve their soil, to do better farming, to increase their income, and to improve living in every way.

But the records are crystal clear that AAA, now PMA, has made major contribution in many ways. All of these have dealt directly with the soil, with

improving it, with using it better, with helping the soil to help those who farm it.

So farm lands in Alabama are richer and better. This is revealed by the fact that production per acre is higher and the production per worker on farms is bigger.

This is true to the extent that farmers are again wondering about surpluses. Peanut growers, for example, are to vote on December 9 as to whether they will have marketing quotas for control of production with price support, or for keeping production up to where surpluses will be detrimental.

As I view these figures I find that tens of thousands of miles of terraces have been built in Alabama during the last decade with the aid of AAA, or PMA. The biggest year in terracing was 87,705,000 feet in 1938. This equals about 16,611 miles in one year.

With more land terraced farmers turned to the addition of mineral fertilizers in order to make pastures, grow legumes, and make other improvements. Early in this program the addition of phosphate and basic slag was done on a small scale. In recent years it has been done on a much bigger scale. And potash is now being added under the PMA program because more potash is needed with more legume farming. The same is true also of liming materials.

There are several other important PMA projects. Each one is designed to improve the land and its operations, thereby helping farmers to help themselves.

I like the way the program was set up by Congress; and the way it functions. Congress provided that these grants to farmers be in accordance with recommendations of the Experiment Station in each state as carried to farmers by county agents and other extension workers. This is right. It is also democracy.

Another provision is that of a county committee of farmers in each county. This committee is elected by farmers. It is, therefore, democratic and tied closely to the local people.

There is also a state committee that has overall direction through the county committees. In addition to working with the county committees the state committee is the connecting link between the state and federal offices, functioning under the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture.

While reviewing this program I'm reminded that American farmers have had some kind of agricultural program since the enactment of the first laws concerning agriculture. At first it was teaching and regulation. Then came the experiment stations, followed by extension work through county agents to farm people.

This educational job worked so well that an adjustment became necessary. Production exceeded consumption. This is why the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was created. Then marketing was added, and the name was changed to Production and Marketing Administration.

In conjunction with soil improvement the program now includes, through other laws, provision for supporting prices of farm products. This, in my judgment, rounds out a complete program for enabling farmers to farm better, to enrich their lands, and to live better without fear of collapse in their economy.

It all adds up to a great story, a story of success and progress.
